

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation and a misuse of the public airwaves. Rather than providing balanced information about the candidates and allowing the public to take that information to the polls, the choice to air a one-sided piece of political propaganda plainly benefits Senator Kerry's opposition thus playing partisan politics.

Sinclair, if it is going to serve the communities where its stations broadcast, should be required to air a counterpoint to this documentary such as Going Up River - another piece about Senator Kerry's service to our country during the Vietnam War.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

We, as the citizens in a free society where the democratic ideal provides the motivating force behind the choices we make, need to hold our broadcasters to a higher standard and make it difficult for them to renew their licenses when they fail to comply.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.